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Committees
Economic Development, Small
Business and Regulatory Reform VC
Families and Human Services VC
Government Operations
Health Policy

The Jacobs Report

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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I.S.D. BILLS PASS SENATE

In response to the scandal that erupted last year in the Oakland County Intermediate School District, the Senate unanimously passed a series of bills setting new controls on Michigan's intermediate school districts (ISDs).

The Senate version of the package, if signed into law, would put new controls on election and removal of ISD board members and set new procedures for taking bids on building construction.

As amended on the Senate floor, House Bills 4338, 4947 and 5376 would give ISD constituent school districts the ability to remove an ISD board member and allow voters to recall a board member in constituent school districts. The legislation also sets procedures for a school district to designate a representative to a body that elects ISD members and allows the district to direct its representative to vote for a specific individual. The bill also requires that any election be held under the provision of the state's Open Meetings Act. An ISD's proposed budget would have to be reviewed by all its constituent school districts and subsequently approved by resolution. When planning new construction, ISDs would be mandated to obtain competitive bids under the same requirements as school districts and/or charter schools. ISDs, public school districts and charter school boards would all be required to post advertisements for construction bids on a website overseen by either a school organization or the Department of Management and Budget. And, beginning July 1, 2005, the legislation also requires all ISD board officers to be members of the board.

A more punitive, extensive package is still pending in the House, where Speaker Rick Johnson (R-LeRoy) said he would push for legislative subpoena authority over all the ISDs in the state.

"There's nothing wrong with a little oversight and sunshine," said Senator Gilda Z. Jacobs (D-Huntington Woods). "But let's not punish everyone because of the misdeeds of a few bad actors."

GOVERNOR: FEDS NOT FAIR TO MICHIGAN

This week, Governor Granholm told a gathering sponsored by the Michigan Road Builders Association (MRBA) that it is urgent Congress pass a federal highway bill that returns a fair share of gas taxes back to Michigan so that the state will have the necessary resources to maintain its roads.

"Congress needs to immediately pass, and President Bush needs to sign, a federal highway bill that returns our fair share of gas taxes back to Michigan and provides us with the necessary resources to maintain our roads," Granholm said. "Michigan has a lot at stake in the federal transportation reauthorization debate and, as the Congressional clock ticks away, we're running the risk that they will leave for summer recess without getting the job done."

The Governor said failure to pass a bill with the \$318 billion in funding over six years approved by the Senate has already cost Michigan more than a quarter of a billion dollars in highway funding this year alone. Emphasizing that transportation funding is not a partisan issue, she noted that every member of our congressional delegation,

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Democrat and Republican, has recognized the need for additional transportation funding, with several members from Michigan co-sponsoring a bill to provide \$375 billion over the same period of time. "Sadly, the President has threatened to veto any bill that exceeds \$256 billion, which would not even keep pace with inflation," Granholm said. "At the President's funding level, our commitment to preserve our roads and bridges is in serious jeopardy."

The Governor said the President's position is troubling given comments he made on a recent visit to Michigan about the poor condition of our roads, while conveniently failing to acknowledge that he is the roadblock preventing the conferees from making any progress toward getting the reauthorization passed.

Granholm acknowledged the MRBA for its efforts both as road builders and as co-chairs of the Michigan Transportation Team. The association has made a tremendous difference through their letters and emails to Capitol Hill, their calls to Congress, and their networking with other donor state coalitions – donor states being those states that send more gas taxes to Washington than they receive in federal transportation dollars.

The Governor's comments on the federal highway transportation bill are just the latest action taken by the Governor to highlight Michigan's role as a donor state.

In February, Granholm met with the Chair of the House Transportation Committee, Representative Don Young (R-Alaska).

Earlier this month, the Governor participated in a teleconference on the federal highway bill with House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi and House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee ranking member James Oberstar. She also joined with other governors in sending a bipartisan letter to Congress urging inclusion of the Senate-passed border provisions.

"Our collective efforts have brought us so close...this is not the time to let up. All of us need to redouble our efforts and push Congress and the President as hard as possible in the next 25 days before this extension runs out and Congress goes home for the summer," Granholm concluded.

NO 2004 FISH GUIDE

Because of cuts to the state budget, the Michigan Department of Community Health will not update or distribute its annual Michigan Family Fish Consumption guide. The guide, particularly important to children under 15 and women who may become pregnant, are pregnant or who are breastfeeding, educates the public about contaminants found in fish from Michigan's waterways. Nearly all aquatic dwellers contain traces of mercury; higher levels may harm an unborn or young child's developing brain and nervous system.

The 2003 Michigan Family Fish Consumption guide can be located online at:
http://www.michigan.gov/documents/FishAdvisory03_67354_7.pdf

All Michigan legislation can be tracked at <http://www.legislature.michigan.gov/>.

State Senator Gilda Jacobs represents the 14th Senate District, which includes Beverly Hills, Bingham Farms, Farmington, Farmington Hills, Ferndale, Franklin, Hazel Park, Huntington Woods, Lathrup Village, Oak Park, Pleasant Ridge, Royal Oak Township, Southfield, and Southfield Township. She is the Minority Vice Chair of the Families & Human Services Committee and the Economic Development, Small Business & Regulatory Reform Committee. She also serves on the Government Operations and Health Policy Committees.

Constituents of the 14th District may contact Senator Jacobs at sengjacobs@senate.michigan.gov or toll-free at 1-888-937-4453.

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